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ABSTRACT

In 1975, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory implemented a Career/Life Planning Program for all employees. The program's aims are to assist employees in taking responsibility for their own careers, revive their creativity, and stimulate active career planning. The program is staffed by counselors with a combination of psychological and technical backgrounds. Components of the program include: individual career and life-transition counseling; a library of occupational and educational information; and a series of career planning workshops. One result of the workshops is the development of an individualized career strategy plan. Employees participating in the Career/Life Planning Program cluster into four areas: (1) those assessing how they are doing in their current careers; (2) those who are exploring or seeking alternate careers; (3) those who are seeking to improve interpersonal communications; and (4) those who are interested in personal growth. Participants' evaluations have been extremely favorable. Supervisors of over half of the participants have reported continuing long-term improvement in employee productivity, morale, and attitude. Through the Career/Life Planning Program, many of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory's employees have taken charge of their careers and become their own "career managers." (Author)

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CAREER/LIFE PLANNING PROGRAM IN AN INDUSTRIAL SETTING

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LAWRENCE LIVERMORE LABORATORY
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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CAREER/LIFE PLANNING PROGRAM IN AN INDUSTRIAL SETTING*

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Abstract

In 1975, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory implemented a Career/Life Planning Program for all employees. The Program's aims are to assist employees in taking responsibility for their own careers, revive their creativity, and to stimulate active career planning. The Program is staffed by counselors with a combination of psychological and technical backgrounds. Components of the Program include: Individual career and life-transition counseling; a library of occupational and educational information; and, a series of career planning workshops. The workshops involve group interaction rather than formal informational lectures. Activities include interest and skill assessment as well as values clarification. Workshop participants learn communication and planning techniques and explore the risk and commitment necessary for effective career management. One result of the Career/Life Planning Workshop is the development of an individualized career strategy plan. Concerns of employee's participating in the Career/Life Planning Program cluster in four areas: 1) those assessing how they are doing in their current career; 2) those who are exploring or seeking an alternate career; 3) those who are seeking to improve interpersonal communications; and, 4) those who are pursuing personal growth. Since its implementation in 1975, over 500 Laboratory employees have voluntarily participated in the Career/Life Planning Workshops and many more have received individual counseling and informational services. Participant's evaluations have been extremely favorable. Numerous cases of renewed creativity of once stagnated employees have been noted and followed over time. Supervisors of over half of the participants have reported continuing long term improvement in employee productivity, morale, and attitude. Through the Career/Life Planning Program many of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory's employees have taken charge of their careers and become their own "career manager".

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Introduction

Lawrence Livermore Laboratory's Career/Life Planning Program has been developed in response to change. Changes in society have involved values, role expectations, and accelerated social mobility. The changing technology has involved rapid computerization and increasing rapid job obsolescence. Many individuals have become overspecialized in their careers. In addition, there is the constant change in individual human needs. Many of us entered careers twenty years ago accutely aware of the need for safety and security. After years in a career most individuals are experiencing other human needs, such as the need for independence, affiliation, or self-actualization. All of these changes, social, technological, and developmental, press for individuals to periodically examine who they are, where they are in life and career, what options they have available, which direction or redirection they should take, and how they should go about attaining their goals. In short, these changes press for career/life planning.

Purpose

In February, 1975, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory implemented a Career/Life Planning Program for all employees.[1] This Program grew out of the need of employees to reawaken stagnated careers. It also grew out of the need to stimulate discuss-

ion and interaction between individual employees and their supervisors and managers in the area of career/life planning. Most importantly, it grew out of the need to assist employees in taking charge of their own careers and become their own career managers.

Staffing

The Career/Life Planning Program is staffed by counselors with a wide variety of backgrounds. All have had many years of experience working in an industrial setting. Some are Behavioral Scientists with graduate degrees in counseling psychology. In addition, there are several Adjunct Counselors who are working scientists, engineers, technicians, and administrators who spend a portion of their time working as career counselors in the Employee Assistance Division. Most of these Adjunct Counselors also hold advanced degrees in the Behavioral Sciences.

Components of the Career/Life Planning Program

Individual Counseling

Individual counseling is available for any employee who requests this service. Employees seek counseling for a variety of reasons. These reasons range from requests for simple factual information on available educational courses or for assistance in developing education and occupational goals, to requests for feedback on the reality of career goals, to crisis intervention for individuals who are undergoing traumatic personal situations such as divorce or loss of job. Employees are given whatever assistance and information is available. When appropriate, they are referred to specific sources of factual information in a selected career. Those with personal problems which require long term counseling or therapy are referred to appropriate agencies in the community. The major focus in the career counseling sessions is on assisting employees in the process of decision making around careers by providing them with the tools and techniques that they can use to gather appropriate information and data and to make informed decisions for themselves. Over 200 Laboratory employees receive career counseling each year.

The Career Information Center

A Career Information Center has been established as a focal point of information useful in career development. The Center is staffed by a full-time career information specialist. The Center contains several hundred volumes on both general and specific career or job information as well as books on personal growth, communication and related subjects. The Center is not seen as a library, but rather as a focal point that can facilitate employees' search for information to be used in career decision making. The career information specialist has established personal contacts with individuals throughout the Laboratory who can act as resource experts on specific careers. These resource individuals can often give much more critical and up to date information about the characteristics of jobs than most books. The Center offers assistance in resume preparation and also houses a computer terminal which provides access to a local computerized career information system.

Workshop Series

The heart of the Career/Life Planning Program is the career planning workshop series. The current six-week workshop cycle which accomodates eighteen individuals is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Career/Life Planning Workshop Series

WEEK	HOURS	ACTIVITY
First	3½	Orientation Module
Second	16	Assessment Module
Third	1	Video-Taped Interview
Fourth	12	Motivated Skills Module
Fifth	1	Individual Counseling Session
Sixth	3½	Career Strategy Module

During the first week of the cycle, eighteen employees attend a half day orientation to career planning. This orientation is designed to address the question of the need for career planning. Small group activities are presented which parallel the process of the activities that will be experienced in the workshop series and provide participants with the flavor of the workshop activities. Participants are given the opportunity to express their expectations about career planning and discuss the amount of commitment expected from them in terms of time or energy. During the second week of the cycle, the eighteen participants attend a two-day assessment workshop. During the course of this workshop the eighteen participants work in groups of three or five. Each individual's values, needs and interests are assessed and participants are given the opportunity to identify the various career opportunities that are available to them. The focus is on career and life options, options not just at the Laboratory but outside as well. In addition, participants are assisted in developing their own definition of career success. Instruments utilized in this workshop segment include the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory, the Work Values Inventory, and several experiential exercises. In addition discussions are presented on Transactional Analysis, job enrichment, and overcoming barriers. At the conclusions of the two day assessment workshop, participants are introduced to the concept of motivated skills and asked to complete a booklet describing a series of achievement events in their lives. During the third week participants bring the completed booklet to a one hour individual

counseling session. During this session they discuss the achievement events with the counselor and the session is recorded on video tape. At the start of the fourth week the eighteen participants attend a six hour training session. During this session the group is presented with the theory, concepts, and assumptions associated with the identification of motivated skills. In this session the participants learn to identify patterns of motivated skills through the lecture/demonstration method. They finish the session by actually identifying the skills of one of the workshop participants. During the remainder of the fourth week groups of three participants and one counselor return for half day sessions in which each participant's motivated skills are identified. During the fifth week each participant attends a one hour counseling session to review the obtained data, clarify goals, and outline a career strategy plan. Finally, the participants return during the sixth week for a half-day career strategy planning workshop session. During this session each individual spends about fifteen minutes outlining for fellow workshop participants what they have learned about their interests, values, needs, and skills and how these relate to their current job and their future career plans. Currently about 125 employees per year participate in the Career/Life Planning Workshop series. About 65% of the participants are men, 35% women. About 40% of the participants are professional scientists and engineers, the remainder are in technician, craft, service, and administrative occupations. While the ages of participants ranges from 18 to 65, the majority of participants tend to cluster into areas i.e., most males are between 38 and 45, and most females are in their early 30's.

Significant Aspects of the Program

Focus on the Individual and on Process

The Career/Life Planning Program is a process rather than an intellectual exercise or classroom experience. The workshops focus is on group interaction and stresses the exchange of information and attitudes between participants. The workshop environment can be a safe proving ground for trial conversations that will later be initiated with the supervisor on the job. Data gathering techniques can be multiplied by group interaction. The importance of similarities and differences in individual values is facilitated and clarified by group interaction. Participants are encouraged to communicate the ideas, issues, and plans that have been developed in the workshop with both their supervisors and with their family members. Finally, the counselors and workshop facilitators accept and respect the goals of the individual employee. Our Career Planning Program is seen as an open system which is individually oriented. This approach focuses on identifying the individual's needs, abilities, interests, and skills. The Program attempts to illuminate all of the various options and alternatives that are potentially available for the individual. The system tends to focus on career/life planning with the assumption that the job aspects of the self are really only parts of the total self and that the working self effects all other dimensions of one's life.

Primary Concerns of Participating Employees

The concerns of participating employees have tended to fall into four different areas. The first area is career assessment. By career assessment, we mean individuals who are seeking either to establish or confirm a career identity. The focus is on their current job. This group includes individuals that have been in a particular career for one or two years and are looking around to find out whether this is the appropriate career for them and how their interests compare with other individuals in the same career. But, probably the more typical individual involved in career assessment is the individual at middle career or mid-life. An example is the forty year old engineer who left school twenty years ago with the goal of becoming established as an engineer in a specific discipline with some perception of income level and place in society. For this individual the workshop is a place to assess where he has been, where he is now, and what the future holds for him. The second group of concerns focus on career exploration. The individual is seeking information about job options. The focus is on other potential jobs and assignments. The individual may be dissatisfied about the current job and may be looking around for other opportunities. This category includes the individual who is considering moving into management, and is asking the question, "Is management the kind of job for me?" Others must make the decision of whether to become more specialized or more of a generalist. Some may be considering moving to another organization or going into teaching. The third group is focusing on communication. The individual may have a need to improve the ability to express ideas or feelings to supervisors, to peers or even to family members. The focus here is on a perceived communication problem. Finally, the fourth group is focused on personal growth. These individuals are seeking to maximize their potential both on the job and throughout life. The focus here is on internal processes and on how to grow; how to become a better engineer; how to become a better spouse, how to become a better parent; how to grow as a person.

Livermore Achievement Motivation Process (LAMP)

A major assessment element of the Career/Life Planning Workshop series involves the identification of functional skills and motivations. In an effort to select the best skill identification process available, the works of Richard Bolles,[2] John Crystal,[3] Bernard Haldane,[4] and Arthur Miller[5] were reviewed and aspects of their skill identification techniques were incorporated into the Career/Life Planning Program. Early in 1976 the model developed by Arthur Miller entitled System for Identifying Motivated Abilities (SIMA) was chosen to serve as the basis for skill identification in the workshops. During 1976 and 1977 this skill identification process underwent a series of changes and modifications which included

the introduction of video-taping techniques and the use of a group analysis process rather than expert individual analysis for the identification of skills. By early 1978 this process had evolved sufficiently to develop a new identity which is reflected in the current title Livermore Achievement Motivation Process (LAMP). This process, when used in a group setting, yields a "caricature" or "broad brush" approximation of an individual's motivational essence i.e., the unique way that the individual moves through life and the skills and abilities that the individual utilizes when acting within or upon the environment. The LAMP process involves the following steps:

a) Each workshop participant develops a comprehensive outline of discreet activities they have actively performed, they enjoyed doing, and believe they did well.

b) Each participant chooses six of the achievement activities, including one from childhood, and one from the teen years, and elaborates with a long paragraph on each of the achievements describing in great detail what the individual did, how the achievement was accomplished, and what was enjoyable or satisfying about the achievement.

c) A trained counselor conducts a focused interview eliciting a detailed description of the individual's activities in each of the six achievements. About ten minutes is spent on each achievement. The interview is recorded on video tape for use in the following week.

d) The participants then attend a training session in which they are introduced to the LAMP model and learn observation, recording, and patterning techniques.

e) Finally, small groups of participants, led by a trained facilitator, view the video taped interview, record their "motivational" observations, and construct an individual achievement motivation profile.

Following are some major assumptions that are associated with the LAMP model.

a) Achievement motivation is enduring and does not change significantly for most of us throughout life.

b) Achievement motivation stems from within. It is an internal force that drives the individual.

c) Achievement motivation controls behavior. It is the individual's motivational style and functional skills that determine how the job is done, not the job description.

d) Achievement motivation is irresistible. If an individual is blocked from utilizing motivated skills the result is frustration; when the individual is focused on using "unmotivated" skills the result is mediocre or just satisfactory performance.

The Livermore Achievement Motivational Process has six major dimensions.

1. Skills: Each individual has a set of functional skills that they use over and over again throughout their lives.

2. Environment: Each individual has one or two specific environmental settings that he or she gravitates towards and operates best within.

3. Object: Each individual has an object or substance or thing that he or she tends to work with.

4. Flavor: Each individual brings a unique flavor to each achievement activity.

5. Personal Interaction Style: Each individual seeks to assume a preferred personal interaction style with others when performing an achievement.

6. Pay-Off: Each individual's behavior is motivated by a pay-off, the motivational essence of the individual, the driving force behind the behavior. The pay-off is the critical element associated with each achievement. If this element is missing, the activity is usually not considered an achievement by the participant.

Modifications and Adjustments

One major modification in the Career/Life Planning Workshop series was the evolution of the skill identification portion from a short checklist activity into a more detailed autobiographical phase and finally to the incorporation of video and group process techniques which has culminated in the Livermore Achievement Motivation Process (LAMP). A second modification of the Career/Life Planning Workshop series involved the length of the time that any individual was involved in workshop activities. When the Program was initiated in February, 1975 completion of all workshop modules for any given individual required approximately 4½ months. This 4½ month process was accompanied by a very high drop-out rate among participants i.e., 25% of the participants dropped out between the Orientation and the Assessment module; 50% of the remainder dropped out between the Assessment and the Motivated Skills module; and 80% of those that completed the Motivated Skills module failed to complete the Career Strategy module. Consequently, several adjustments were made in the spacing and timing of the workshop modules. These adjustments culminated in the current six week cycle which is represented in Table 1. Currently 95% of the employees that start the Career/Life Planning Workshop series complete all modules.

Results

A detailed description of the results of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory's Career/Life Planning Program can be found in the selected case studies of early participants that have been described

in a 1976 conference paper.[6] More recent and more quantified results can be found in the tabulations of workshop evaluation questionnaires of Program participants and their supervisors.

Participant Evaluation

Follow-up questionnaires were sent to the 125 participants in the 1976 Career/Life Planning Workshop series approximately one year after their participation. All of the questionnaires were returned. Half of the employees reported a significant improvement in both the quality and quantity of their work since participating in the workshops. Three-quarters of the employees reported improved morale or attitude. Over half of the employees reported an improvement in communication with their peers and two-thirds of the employees reported improved communication with their supervisors. These data are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Percentage of Employees Reporting Job Related Improvement One Year After Participation In Career Planning Workshops

Improved quality of work	50%
Improved quantity of work	50%
Improved morale or attitude	75%
Improved peer communication	58%
Improved supervisory communication	66%

While only 10% of the workshop participants changed departments, 25% changed job titles since attending the Career/Life Planning Workshops; 42% changed the tasks they perform on the job; and 50% became involved in courses to upgrade their current skills. Another 42% are taking courses to qualify for a new job and 66% are pursuing courses aimed towards personal growth. These data are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Percentage of Employees Reporting Changes One Year After Participation In Career Planning Workshops

Changed department	10%
Changed job title	25%
Changed job tasks	42%
Upgrading current skills	50%
Qualifying for new job	42%
Pursuing personal growth	66%

Supervisors Evaluation

Similar follow-up questionnaires were sent to the supervisors of the 125 employees attending the 1976 Career/Life Planning Workshop series. Over 90% of the questionnaires were returned. While slightly less supervisors than employees (46%) reported an improvement in quality and quantity of the employee's work, a full 81% of the supervisors reported improved morale or attitude of their employees. An improvement in communication was reported for many of the employees attending the Career/Life Planning Workshop. These data are summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Percentage of Supervisors Reporting Job-Related Improvement For Employees One Year After Participation in Career Planning Workshops

Improved quality of work	46%
Improved quantity of work	46%
Improved morale or attitude	81%
Improved peer communication	64%
Improved supervisory communication	46%

In evaluating the usefulness of the Career/Life Planning Workshop series, all of the responding supervisors reported that the attendance in the Career/Life Planning Workshops was useful for the employee while over 80% of the supervisors reported that participation was useful for both the department and the Laboratory. These data are summarized in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Percentage of Supervisors Reporting Usefulness of The Career Planning Workshops

Useful for the employee	100%
Useful for the department	81%
Useful for the Laboratory	81%

Finally, in evaluating the economic usefulness of attendance in the Career/Life Planning Workshop, supervisors were asked the question, "Do you believe the Laboratory will recover the cost of sending this employee to the Program?" More than two-thirds of the supervisors (71%) responded in the affirmative. Less than one-third of the supervisors felt that the Laboratory would not recover the cost of sending the employee to the Program. These data are summarized in Table 6.

TABLE 6
Percentage of Supervisors Responding to The Question "Do You Believe The Laboratory Will Recover The Cost of Sending This Employee Through The Program?"

Yes	71%
No	29%

Conclusions

The Career/Life Planning Program at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory is well respected by both employees and management. The Program has not caused excessive or inappropriate unrest among employees. The Program has not caused extensive job changing. Conversely, the Program has significantly contributed toward positive attitudes and high morale of participating employees. In case after case, it has been demonstrated that participation in the Career/Life Planning Program has resulted in the revitalization of employee creativity. This Program, unlike many programs found in industry, has been focused almost entirely on the individual employee. All the activities and all of the counseling have been focused on helping each individual employee decide which career options were most appropriate for that employee. The impact on management has been a slow radiation upward from the employees. The next logical stage or extension of the Career/Life Planning Program is the completion of the development and planning loop with management. The completion of that loop is currently being implemented through the supervisory training program recently developed at the Laboratory.

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